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"He does not seem alien, but he is not ours either..." Ludwig Bauer: a Central European Homo Nostalgicus?

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**"HE DOES NOT SEEM ALIEN, BUT HE IS NOT OURS
EITHER..."¹ LUDWIG BAUER: A CENTRAL EUROPEAN
HOMO NOSTALGICUS?**

Abstract

The aim of this article is to identify the Central European roots of Ludwig Bauer's literature based on analysis of the writer's autobiography, *Toranj kiselih jabuka*, published in 2013. Due to transformations of literary canons and cultures of post-communist countries during the "twenty-five years of freedom", the myth of Central Europe has also evolved. The nostalgia, postmodern in its origin, remains a measure that universalises Central European culture and, as a literary concept, crosses the already blurred boundaries of Yugonostalgia (or nostalgia for childhood), thus becoming an identity-oriented project that grows out of nothing but the Central European imaginarium of culture and culture of memory, typical of the Central European borderlands. Therefore, the aim of the text is to identify the supra-regional elements implemented at the regional level of the small homeland and, in consequence, to describe the vision of identity that forms in this relationship.

Keywords: Central Europe, nostalgia, transformation, literary identity, Danube Swabians

1 "nije ni njihov, ni naš" (Pogačnik, 2011)

INTRODUCTION

In his article, *Variations on the theme: Danilo Kiš and Central Europe*, Mihajlo Pantić presents the following conclusion: "without a doubt Danilo Kiš should be included in the potential imagined lexicon of Central Europe, whether real or virtual, and of the historical literature poetics of the region" (Pantić, 2002, s. 82). Even without hazarding a definition of the notion of Central Europe, as to which no one in Europe knows where it starts or ends, it is still good to consider the contemporary condition of the monster, whose look, as Kiš put it, cannot be described even by those who saw it (Pantić, 2002, p. 82). The discussion on Central Europe from the mid-1980s, hibernated in a number of studies and publications, has managed to form a certain canon of Central European writers; an "imagined lexicon". In the case of both Yugoslavia and Croatia (despite the "confiscation of memory" (Ugrešić, 2002, p. 242) of the past community), it is Danilo Kiš himself who is the most prominent figure belonging to literary and identity-related realms of Eastern Europe. His definitions explained in his essays and artistic works make a material theoretical context for this reflection, the chronological caesura of which, in turn, is marked by the 1980s, as it was then that the cult geo-cultural metaphor, aspiring to become a metonymy of identity, appeared. Due to the abundance of interpretations, fluidity of meanings and oneiric nature (Kiss, 2009), as well as the oftentimes questioned plausibility, the metaphor is treated like a myth. Finally, the 1980s was also when Ludwig Lujo Bauer wrote his first books. Although not yet included in the "imagined lexicon", Bauer is the most authentic inheritor of the Central European identity on the Croatian literary scene. The reflection on his literary activity, understood, as Kiš put it, as a response to the nationalist narrowing of and an alternative to "uniformization", was inspired by the writer's autobiography published in 2013. Although set in a different political and literary context than Kiš's (more than 25 years later), it appears to form a logical continuum of the myth.

The time after the collapse of the iron curtain, which served as an identity boundary of Central Europe, (as well for Croatia) was the period of countless transformations and heated discussions, disputes and crises that "gripped vast areas of culture, together with the particularly sensitive realm of art and education, which had

considerable impact on the shaping of canons" (Bakula, 2011, p. 14). The potential and imagined, rather than realistic, nature of the Central European canon resembles a typical post-communist "oscillation between [its] closed and open form, reflected in the line-up of political forces, extremely disparate attitudes to tradition and endless disputes on who shall and who shall not represent the nation" (Bakula, 2011, p. 16). The political, historical and literary disputes that Croatia has witnessed since 1991 also have their Central European reverse, as they express "far-reaching differences in the assessment of what should make the foundations of collective, national and social identity in the new, post-communist reality" (Bakula, 2011, p. 16). One of the potential choices is Central Europe which, because of its already emphasised non-definable character, is understood as "fate", "a set of shared memories and experiences, or, eventually, an identity-building structure". In the case of Ludwig Bauer (and Kiš), however, it could be understood rather as a drifting cultural supra-identity (Pantić, 2002, p. 78), built upon individual smaller cultural and national identities. Or as a literary identity (Gvozden, 2002, p. 83-94).

A meaningful example of continuation of literature rooted in the Central European cultural imaginarium was created by Ludwig Bauer's literary activity, while the main narrative which immortalised the said imaginarium was the inherently postmodern nostalgic discourse. The already mentioned autobiography not only organises thematically the basic Central European myths, such as the myth of the sea of Pannonia, language regarded as fate, immateriality of the Central European identity, faith in the worth of diversity or fear of homogeneity (Pantić, 2002, s. 80), but also provokes a question about the direction of changes of the transformation period.

In the case of Ludwig Bauer, the Central European key seems to be an almost inescapable interpretative category, as it is a very specific figure that stands in the centre of focus. Born in 1941 in Sisak, in a Danube Swabian family, as a child he witnessed disintegration of the world of the biggest pre-war minority in Croatia, who almost became extinct after 1945. Bauer returns to these events which he considers symbolic in the context of political transformations of the 21st century in almost every single novel that he wrote, making the fate of Danube Swabians the leitmotif of his literary output. His intimate memories, included in *Toranj kiselih jabuka*, concerning the writer's young years, are thus accompanied by

a critical description of the history of disappearance and devastation of the reality formed before WW2. The readers follow the narrator's footsteps in more than three decades of his life, starting from childhood war memories, through the young years spent near Vukovar, in Makarska and Sisak, until studies in Zagreb and the later education and work in Czechoslovakia (with a short break for Paris). A storyline that is parallel to the memories of the bitter times of growing up in the stormy 2nd half of the 20th century, or perhaps the dominant one, is the writer's literary autobiography, i.e. the meticulously described process of Bauer's maturing to write and reminiscence of his life's experiences, the people met and the places visited, which he would later (in the next "writing" decade) use in his novels.

Asked about what made him write a biography that has more than five hundred pages, describing the bitter taste of growing up, Bauer answered that in the first place, it was an attempt to decipher and find the hidden meanings of certain elements of his biography and trace a common exponent of his youth experiences. The other motivation was an urge to find the origins and roots of the biographical materials that he used in his novels, as well as the sources of inspiration and places (Ožegović, 2011) where Bauer's writing started. In fact, the act of writing as such was incorporated in the autobiography. Not only does *Toranj kiselih jabuka* describe in detail the genesis of some elements of Bauer's novel, but it also contains their extensive reprints. Such a combination of fiction and faction makes *Toranj kiselih jabuka* a poetic literary inversion and perhaps it is through its prism that we should decipher the meanings of Bauer's previous novels, considering it to be their follow-up.

THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN (SUPRA-)IDENTITY

Following further the tracks of the Central European non-existing lexicon, the path set by George Konrád in *Dream of Central Europe* from 1985 seems the most appropriate to take. As reflected by individual elements separated by the author, Bauer-the-writer and Bauer-the-protagonist could be easily included in the gallery of figures such as Kiš or Kundera (Richter, 2002, p. 97), and thus within the frameworks of the myth of the "longed-for cultural integration (...), which comes from the East, <<but this time from a different East, which opposes the former split into two<<" resurrected in the

1980s and revitalised at the turn of the centuries (Richter, 2002, p. 97). This myth forms the basis of the unique identity which, as in Bauer's case, is specifically smooth and does not stay within the limits of Croatian, Serbian, Yugoslavian or German identity. It is rather an "artificial Central European existence, which does not correspond to (the sense of) reality" (Pantić, 2002, p. 80). Through his biography, the narrator protagonist becomes much more than merely the embodiment of multilingualism (he was bilingual by birth plus he learnt several languages as part of his education). To him, a language was fate on the one hand and a knowingly made choice on the other. As he wrote in his biography, when living in Prague he would deliberately abandon Yugoslavian accent (Bauer, 2013, p. 395-402), which made him free to become a member of cultural and linguistic circles larger than only Yugoslavian (Bauer, 2013, p. 367-374). The reminiscences of his journeys, e.g. across Slovakia, show that Bauer was a fan of diversity, which he considered not only a value, but also a typical state of a central European mind.

The summer school of Slovakian language and culture was well organised. The blond-haired assistants reminded me of good witches from fairy-tales. They would teach us correct pronunciation and sing Slovakian songs and they were always there if we needed them. The German girl, Renata, had a coffee machine in her room, so she invited me from time to time. She had short dark hair and eyes that were so intensely blue that it was virtually impossible look into them without excitement. I also was in good graces of a nice Hungarian girl. As I managed to buy cheap some Crowns in Vienna, I invited her, a friend of hers and Herman Vogl's friend (a Slovakian) to a good *vinárnia* for my birthday. I do not know her motives - maybe it was that excellent Hungarian wine, or maybe the gypsy band - but the fact is that the nice Hungarian decided to be my birthday gift herself. The future teacher of Slovakian in some school for the Slovakian minority enchanted me with her sense of humour and brilliant intelligence. Later it turned out that, as a poet would put it, her breasts were worth remembering as well. The memory of her inspired me to create one of the characters from *The Short Chronicle of the Weber Family* in her image, whom I also named after her...Shortly speaking, it

was all so inspiring that I fell in eternal love with both the Slovakian and Hungarian culture. (Bauer, 2013, p. 315)

Next to the conventional reverse, also the heterogeneity of the Central European world, so glorified in the writer's autobiography, tried him on virtually all plains: personal, scientific, literary and the plain of entertainment.

In the doctoral students' house, we lived in a tight community. We spent evenings together, unable to go to theatres or wine bars every single day. We were also together during weekends, or at least most weekends. Our community was dominated by Russians, but there was also a Bulgarian, several Iranians, Ghaneses and an Indonesian. (...) But life was also full of colours and emotions outside of this closed circle. I had lectures at the Faculty of Philology, but I spent much more time in the *Crimea*, a café close to the University, where both writers and students would spend hours. (...) It was there that my friend, Janek, introduced me to Ján Stach, an extraordinarily talented poet, one year my senior, one of the best in Europe at that time. (...) Among the writers I met was also Dominik Tatarka, the most valued Slovakian writer of the time, treated as the holy of holies or a national good, with a status comparable to Krleža's in Yugoslavia. Tatarka turned out to be a simple man, fan of discussions with Yugoslavian friends of the Slovakian culture. Having met many more famous and outstanding writers in subsequent years, now I can tell that simplicity and openness was a general feature of those exceptional figures. (Bauer, 2013, p. 317)

Bauer had an opportunity to make the most of his experiences of authentic multi-culture, blurred boundaries and contacts with the great authors of the Central European provenance in the same way as he gorged himself on the French cognac, bought illegally in Tuzex, which he would oftentimes be offered by Tatarka (Bauer, 2013, p. 319). What is equally important, Bauer shared with his Central European comrades a typical fate of a multilingual emigrant: afraid of homogeneity (which was rooted in his childhood already) and hermeticity of his literary message. The childhood, which the author spent, among others, in Sisak, Vukovar and Makarska, made the little Lujo encounter almost all Croatian dialects. Narrow horizons (f.ex.

prejudices based on linguistic distinctness, because little Lujo could often be perceived as "alien"), used to make him resentful and distanced.

In the case of Bauer, the expanded Central European identity could easily be called the Central European supra-identity. It proves to be superimposed and unalienable (and, in Bauer's opinion, prominent mainly in the West, in Paris for instance, where it chafed him as "too tight shoes"). Nevertheless, when analysing the identity-building elements of the writer's biography, there is no escaping from the leitmotif of his writings, which was the trauma related to the dramatic fate of the Danube Swabians. The *Podunavske Švabe*, as they were called within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, constituted the largest national minority until WW2. They settled within the Danube region of Croatia in the 18th century already, as one of the ethnic elements of the multi-cultural Austria-Hungary. Persecuted because of their Yugoslavian Danube origins, they disappeared together with the end of WW2, despite their oftentimes active contribution in the resistance movement (e.g. Bauer's father) and lack of any ties with collaborations. This peculiar history of disappearance of the German-speaking society is highly symbolic to Bauer's writings. Bauer was culturally burdened with exclusion - the fate of people with no homeland, "nomads", refugees and a disappearing social factor, which used to decide about the colours of the monarchy (Richer, 2002, p. 97).

In the context of the above-mentioned commonness of experiences, in his *Variations on Central-European themes* Danilo Kiš, also a nomad and multi-lingual emigrant, isolates two biographical elements, common for Central European writers, which have an effect on their literary output and sensitivity. These are the two totalitarianisms, fascism and communism, and the Jewish trauma/anti-Semitism. In this context, Bauer's experiences look particularly interesting. Fascism and communism set the chronological caesura of experiences that shape the characters in the autobiography: *Toranj kiselih jabuka* starts with the describes outbreak of war and the childish doubt as to in which language to ask for a candy - German or Croatian (Bauer, 2013, p. 11-13), and ends with the protagonist leaving Prague, after his PhD thesis, devoted to Slovakian literature of the 1970s, has been rejected by the university as too "political" and unsuitable for printing in the communist Czechoslovakia. The third element, i.e. the notion of legacy of the

Jewish trauma, seems the most paradoxical element of Bauer's Central European biography, as what we are in fact dealing with is reversed trauma. It is the Germans (here: the Danube Swabians), usually equated with the Nazi occupant and accused of collaboration, that become the victim and an object of repression, to share the fate of Jews and eventually disappear from the cultural map of Yugoslavia.

It was probably this experience of disappearance that marked Bauer with the lifetime-long and unquenchable longing for a world not bound by boundaries. The above is manifested by both certain elements of his biography and his peculiar literary nostalgia. Obligated to choose a subject for a report during his studies in Prague, Bauer chose Karel Toman, a poet from the end of the 19th /beginning of the 20th century, close to him and "painfully up-to-date", whose poems expressed "nostalgia for the times, when Europe had no borders and travellers did not need passports and were not asked for place of birth" (Bauer, 2013, s. 372). These words take on a new meaning after the two decades from the end of the bloody fratricidal war, which put an end to Yugoslavia and, after the introduction of meticulous divisions due to nationality or religion, marked a rebirth of small nation states. And they still remain up-to-date, in the face of strong nationalisms, feuds and mutual resentments that divide the former Yugoslavians.

LITERARY IDENTITY

The composition of *Toranj kiselih jabuka* is based on four chronologically ordered parts, presenting consecutive stages of the process of development of the writer-to-be's narrative skills: from favourite readings, through his first literary friendships and years spent in Prague among writers of worldwide renown up to his first writing attempts and becoming a writer. From the very first to the very last page, the reader has the impression that he or she communes with a narrator who is condemned to writing and anointed to write because of his accumulated lifetime experience. He witnessed people and places disappearing and new countries being established. He is a borderland child, speaking several languages and dialects (with his almost mythical linguistic skills, he quickly manages to acquire the Chakavian dialect, learn Russian, Slovakian and Czech), thus developing a specific Central European literary identity. These few

elements also make up the recognisable figure of an intellectual writer, who harmonises well with the Central Europe myth. It is nothing else but the shared experiences and biographical elements that make the Central European writers so alike. It is also these features that brought the author of the autobiography close to such writers as Kundera, Fuks, Tatarka or Seifert.

Beyond that, *Toranj kiselih jabuka* also serves as Bauer's meta-comment on his own literary output. Extensive quotes from other novels are preceded by presentations of their backgrounds: descriptions of places, people and events, which influenced the poetics and atmosphere of his novels. For instance, a lot of space was given to the circumstances of creation of the novel entitled *Zavičaj, zaborav*, quoted most extensively and closely connected with the author's autobiography. The places and people encountered by Bauer during his stormy life were not without significance to his ability to compose his novels. What shaped him was all types of events and emotions: the fleeting and magical atmosphere of friendship experienced during the thrilling nights spent in the cosy *hospoda Pod ostatnim grosikiem* in the company of his thesis supervisor and other students (Bauer, 2013, p. 377-379), as well as the animated discussions on dangerous marriages of poetry and politics with Czechoslovakian literary scholars, who were friends of his (Bauer, 2013, p. 435-437).

Besides, the Central European literary circles that the writer encountered in Prague, as such, had a considerable impact on his writings. Asked about the significance of being friends with other European writers for his literature, Bauer would point that "the possibility to exist among various circles broadens horizons and makes you richer by the values of the cultures that, in fact, are close to you" (Ožegović, 2011).

The magic lies in being always a beginner, yet with certain skills already. Perhaps how freely I feel in Prague is also an answer to the question why, despite so many praises, my books do not find understanding in Croatia. You win a lot by living on the verge of different cultures, in foreign countries. Each year I go to Vienna, to see some exhibition and take a stroll along the city streets. This is how I fight with monotony. Prague had the biggest impact on my literary career. I loved this city even before I came there, mainly because of Čapek. I was

lucky to have numerous writers among my friends: Kundera, Fuks, Seifert, Hrabal, Tatarka. They all taught me that I need to be fully devoted to literature. And it was them who instilled in me the aversion to artificiality and pretentiousness (Ožegović, 2011).

The process of acquisition of Central European literary attitudes can be called a literary inversion, with the meticulously described stay of the narrator protagonist in Prague being the axis of Bauer's biography and poetics which, in fact, closely mesh. In her review of the book, Lidija Dujić rightly states that it was in Prague that Ludwig Bauer found the alternative centre of both his biography and bibliography. "On the one hand, Prague becomes the writer's imaginary European small homeland, which gives him the opportunity to give free reign of his Europeanism, making him a domesticated foreigner and an abstract European at the same time, while, on the other, the Prague from the book and the literary Prague ultimately define Bauer's literary profile (Dujić, 2014). In the critic's opinion, the goulash offered by Hrabal, Seifert's dedication, the horoscope written for him by Kundera or friendship with Fuks should all be metaphorically interpreted as a process of collection of a literary capital by Bauer.

Yet the memory of the time spent in Prague is much more than a mere nostalgia for the youth. First of all, it marked the discovery of an inexhaustible source of literary inspiration, *ergo*, the shaping of his Central European literary identity. It is a young writer who arrives in Prague to make doctoral studies and a fully shaped and, most importantly, Central European author, who leaves it. Prague is also the finishing line of Bauer's feature biography. This is where the protagonist took his whole poetics from including, as Dujić put it, solid knowledge of literary theories, Čapek's humour, Hrabal's narrative, Fuks' technical skills, Kundera's commitment. "What happened after Prague can be read about starting with the *Short Chronicle of the Weber Family*" (Dujić, 2014) until these days. What is more, what we are dealing with is a fully aware activity: in the already quoted interview, Bauer confessed that popularity of his books in Slovakia can be easily explained: "It is the Central European literary circles and the Central European character of my texts, which the Slovaks find particularly close" (Dujić, 2014).

NOSTALGIA: a Central European Homonostalgicus?

This retrospective automatism of the work in question brings one more interpretative category into mind, i.e. the inherently postmodern nostalgia, understood as both an aesthetic and identity-building category. The nostalgia, which Bauer treated as a literary concept, should be interpreted through the prism of its Central European context. It crosses the blurred boundaries of Yugonostalgia (or nostalgia for childhood), limited by the biographical context, and becomes an identity-building project originating in the Central European imaginary of culture and memorial culture, so typical of the Central European borderland territory.

Nostalgia denotes longing for home which either does not exist anymore or never existed at all. As Svetlana Boym puts it, it is a "sense of losing one's national identity and a romance with one's own fantasy at the same time" (Boym, 2002, 274).

Combining images with reality sometimes leads to creation of a phantasmagoric homeland – which is usually what happens if we deal with heartening nostalgia – in which images and desires are treated with no irony or distance, and which aims at factual creation and reconstruction of the "home", i.e. a space that is being longed for (Boym, 2002, 274).

In Bauer's understanding, however, Central European nostalgia would have a completely opposite nature: it would be a reflective nostalgia, focused on pain rather than on the attempt to return home at all costs. As Boym elaborates, it is a type of nostalgia which does not follow the track of any particular plot. Its specificity lies in attempts to live in several places at once; a concept which brings to mind the image of different time zones, and prefers details to symbols (Boym, 2002, 274). "In the first place, it is connected with social memory, composed of collective frameworks which, although identify individual memory, will never define it ultimately" (Boym, 2002, 274).

Given the above-mentioned elements of the myth of Central Europe, there is no denial that reflective nostalgia is the twin sister of Central Europeanism. They both resist any attempts at elaborating specific definitions, whilst being based on reminiscences and retrospective construction of the past. The most interesting plan for this assumption is the post-communist Croatian identity which, after

numerous redefinitions in the 1990s, caused by the collapse of Yugoslavia, seems to be schizophrenically split (Oraić Tolić, 2005). The stormy discussions around the canon, its strong nationalisation and the painful politicisation of the literary life of Croatia in the last two decades made nostalgia one of the possible alternatives. Obviously, it is not only the "Yugonostalgia", i.e. the nostalgically deformed version of memory of the socialist Yugoslavia, which is now experiencing a renaissance, leading to development of a utopian world that can easily be called the "Nostalgic Republic of Yugoslavia". What I mean is an attitude founded on opposition to the contemporary, official ideological or national discourses. This attitude, developed in response to nationalism and disappointment with political transformation, led to the resurrection of the phantasmagoric and supra-national narrative community manifesting itself in the literary realm that encompasses writers with identity broader than the one set by the new political divisions. Whom I have in mind here are writers such as Ludwig Bauer or Miljenko Jergović who, in "endless disputes on who shall and who shall not represent the nation" (Bakula, 2011, p. 16) in their native Croatia, are placed outside of the binding canons. The way too narrow frames of national Croatian identity, as well as protests against uniformization within one national pattern not only exclude them from the literary life, as shown by the example of "Bauer being given a wide berth" (Stjepandić, 2014) by publishers and publishing houses in the 1990s, but also push them to search for the ideal in the past (*ergo* nostalgia) and in the transnational model of the (Central European) identity. Therefore, the postmodern category of Central Europeanism would focus on apposition against the superimposed homogeneity and "confiscation of memory" (Ugrešić, 2002, p. 242) rather than around its classical meaning, that is, "opposition against the former split in two" (Richer, 2002, p. 97).

CONCLUSION

Based on his autobiographical work, *Toranj kiselih jabuka*, it can be concluded that Bauer's understanding of the concept of Central Europe is similar to Kiš's. The similarity lies not only in the convergence of biographies of these two, with two decisive moments, i.e. the fascism/communism and the already mentioned reversed Holocaust trauma, represented by the trauma of expulsion of the

Danube Swabians, but mainly in the identity being constructed in opposition to the national, nationalistic narrowing, as a "form of resistance to uniformization". Nevertheless, if Kiš identified uniformization with Bolshevism and communism (Gvozden, 2002, p. 87-93), what counts for Bauer is the context of weakness of the democracy introduced in the 1990s and of the contemporary Croatian nationalisms, which keep ridiculing the "reborn" nation.

Bauer's attitude, which represented a significant contribution to the strong nostalgic load of his narration, constitutes an objection against the contemporary Croatian "post-communist oscillation between the closed and the open form of the canon" (Bakula, 2011, p. 14). Or, as vividly described by Maria Dąbrowska-Partyka, "glorification of one's own jar" that the citizens were pumped into "like cucumbers and tightly closed, to separate them as effectively as possible from a completely different outside world" (Dąbrowska-Partyka, 2005). The ostentatious Central European identity thus represents the choice of transcultural opening which resists the affection for hermetic national values, so omnipresent after the collapse of Yugoslavia. This may be further substantiated by the fact that Bauer, a Central European intellectual writer, well aware of the superimposed chafing nationality, despite being recognisable outside of Croatia, having his books translated into foreign languages and winning numerous awards "outside of the jar", still remains undervalued inside. Similarly to the majority of his protagonists, Bauer seems to find himself at the crossroads (*raskrižje*), which is signalled by the title of the final chapter of *Toranj kiselih jabuka*. The identity diagnosis made in the title of this article "he does not seem alien, but he is not ours either..." (Pogačnik, 2011), taken from *Zavičaj, zaborav*, a novel closely connected with the writer's autobiography, closes the story of the dramatic search for one's identity whilst meaningfully representing the Central European fate. Those marked with this fate will always find themselves caught between the *everywhere* and the *nowhere*.

In academic studies (which are sparse anyway), Bauer is usually presented as a borderland author (Dyras, 2011, p. 157–165), a writer of new historical novels that depict human fate clashed with the huge history, or a chronicler of history of Danube Swabians. Yet they do not expose the Central European reverse of his literary output in any way. The reflective Central European nostalgia for the fleeing definitions, the tangibly non-existent world and the characteristically

constructed characters and worlds that Bauer presented in his autobiography greatly contribute to the Central European identities being described and deciphered. My outline should be closed with an obvious conclusion: Ludwig Bauer should undoubtedly be included in the, whether real or virtual, potential imagined lexicon of Central Europe.

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Sažetak

„NE ČINI SE STRAN, ALI NIJE NI NAŠ...” LUDWIG BAUER: SREDNJOEUROPSKI HOMO NOSTALGICUS?

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Cilj je rada identificirati srednjoeuropske korijene književnosti Ludwiga Bauera na temelju analize autobiografije autora, *Toranj kiselih jabuka*, objavljene 2013. Mit o Srednjoj Europi evoluirao je zbog promjena književnoga kanona i kultura postkomunističkih zemalja za vrijeme *dvadesetpetogodišnje slobode*. Nostalgija koja je postmoderna u svojem porijeklu, ostaje mjera srednjoeuropske kulture, kao književni koncept, prekoračuje već nejasne granice jugonostalgije (ili nostalgije djetinjstva), zbog toga postajući projekt orijentiran na identitet koji izrasta iz srednjoeuropske imaginacije o kulturi i kulturnom pamćenju, tipičnome za srednjoeuropska granična područja. Zato je cilj teksta identificirati supraregionalne elemente implementirane na regionalnoj razini male zemlje, i kao posljedica, opisati viziju identiteta koji oblikuje ovaj odnos.

Ključne riječi: Srednja Europa, nostalgija, transformacija, književni identitet, podunavski Nijemci